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COUNTRY : USSR

SUBJECT : "The Use of Artillery in Support of an Army Counterattack", Information Collection of the Artillery No. 49, 1959

Preface

The Collection is designed for generals and officers from commander of artillery of a corps, commanding officer of an artillery division (commanding officer of an engineer brigade), and higher.

Generals and officers of engineer brigades, staffs of artillery corps, armies and military districts having a need-to-know and the appropriate clearances are also permitted to study and use the present Collection.

The follcwing took part in working up materials for the Collection: General-Mayor of Artillery M. T. Glushkov and General-Mayor of Artillery A. N. Yanchinskiy, Docent-Candidates of Military Science Colonels A. A. Averyanov and I. Ye. Rak'mail, Colonels V. P. Godelevich, Yu A. Zhukov, V. A. Kotelkin, A. A. Orlov, N. A. Pavlov, Candidates of Military Science Colonels P. F. Shkarubskiy and I. A. Sholokhov, Lieutenant-Colonel P. S. Ivanov, Major M. I. Yesin, and Engineer-Captain A. N. Samorodov.

The artillery staff requests generals and officers to forward their comments on the contents of the present Collection.

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The Use of Artillery in Support of an Army Counterattack

(Issue 49/1959)

Present-day fire, which is basically composed of mass (massirovanyy) atomic strikes, produces a direct effect on the aims of a counterattack and the methods of its realization.

With the mass use of atomic weapons before a counterattack, the task may be not only the utter destruction of the penetrating enemy grouping, but also it create the necessary conditions for our troops to go over to the offensive.

If in the past the condition for a counterattack was the creation of initial superiority in forces and resources in a given direction, in present-day conditions this superiority can be attained by mass atomic strikes against the main grouping of the enemy penetration. This excludes the necessity for complicated regrouping of forces in the direction of a counterattack and permits this to be executed from the march and sometimes from various directions.

By inflicting considerable losses on the enemy grouping by fire (primarily with atomic strikes) and by a sharp change in the relative strength of forces and resources in our favor, it is possible to carry out flank and frontal counterattacks. On many occasions the carrying out of a frontal counterattack is more advantageous, as it assures from the very beginning the complete destruction of the main grouping of the enemy.

In order to preserve our own troops from possible atomic attack by the enemy and to ensure the possibility of operations under the conditions of the employment of atomic weapons, counter-attacks at night will be employed frequently.

Naturally, the changes in the methods of operations of troops in a counterattack have influenced the combat use of artillery and its fire.

The necessary condition of success for a counterattack is to obtain fire superiority over the enemy, in the first place

superiority in atomic weapons which would prevent any mass atomic strikes against the troops of our counterattacking grouping. Therefore one of the main tasks of artillery, in cooperation with aircraft, is the destruction of the enemy means of atomic attack.

The acquisition of fire superiority by the time of the counterattack is obtained by continuous combat with the weapons of atomic attack and artillery of the enemy during the defensive operation, using both atomic and conventional artillery shells. As a rule, all newly discovered enemy means of atomic attack should be destroyed immediately before the counterattack. The allocation of atomic shells for this purpose must be provided for, and also the fire of tube artillery with ammunition with conventional charges must be employed.

Another, no-less-important condition is the destruction of the enemy grouping's penetration in order to make a decisive alteration in the relative strength of forces in our favor in the direction of the counterattack.

This aim can be attained above all by a mass atomic strike of all weapons of the army and also by a considerable part of the weapons under command of the front.

The experience gained in exercises shows that a mass atomic strike can secure the aims of a counterattack if it is not limited to the framework of the width and depth of the tasks of the counterattacking troops, but also covers the reserves and atomic weapons of the enemy, that is the entire main grouping of his troops.

The scale of the massing of atomic weapons, the objectives for destruction in a mass atomic strike and its extent in frontage and in depth are determined depending on the tasks of the counterattacking troops, the availability of atomic weapons, and the grouping and actions of the enemy troops.

A mass atomic strike, represents, in present-day conditions, the main content of the artillery preparation for a counterattack. Conventional artillery fire is supplementary to the atomic strike, and is used principally for the destruction of objectives and targets that are not destroyed by atomic weapons.

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Looking at the question this way, the carrying out of an artillery preparation may appear different from what it has seemed up to now.

In order to ensure the forward movement and deployment of troops for a counterattack, a mass atomic strike against newly discovered means of atomic attack, as well as against large control points and the reserves of the enemy, can be carried out even before the forward movement of troops from the areas they occupy to the line of deployment. At the same time it is advisable to neutralize, by fire of conventional artillery, all enemy artillery and radio-technical means of intelligence - also the night-vision devices of the enemy if the counterattack is at night.

With the movement of the troops to the line of deployment, or with their approach toward it, it is advisable to bombard the objectives of the immediate assault with atomic and conventional charges. The destruction of the enemy by another method is not excluded.

The duration and makeup of artillery preparation for a counter-attack in each specific case will be determined by the situation, partly by the nature of the troop operations, by the composition of the enemy troop grouping, the availability of atomic weapons, and the method of their employment.

If the counterattack is carried out from the march and the task of the artillery is to support the forward move and deployment of troops, the artillery preparation can be more prolonged than in supporting a counterattack from a position of direct contact with the enemy. Finally, if there is a shortage of atomic weapons, the artillery preparation for a counterattack can consist of several powerful concentrations of fire (ognevoy nalet) using ammunition with conventional and chemical charges.

It is advisable to begin with the use of chemical ammunition with quick-acting toxic substances in the first concentration of fire carried out against enemy artillery and mortar batteries, radiotechnical equipment, and command posts in order to increase the degree of damage. Under favorable meteorological conditions, the more remotely placed artillery batteries and objectives on the flanks of the troop operations can be dealt with by chemical ammunition charged with persistent toxic substances.

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The timing of the last concentration of fire should coincide with the movement out of the troops to the line of deployment, and should be carried out mainly against the immediate objectives of the assault and against enemy artillery.

The artillery preparation for a counterattack, in all cases, must be powerful and as short as possible in order to produce a bigger element of surprise of troop operations. At the same time the shortening of the duration of the artillery preparation should not be detrimental to the resolution of the tasks. In all cases, it is necessary to inflict such destruction on the enemy's manpower, tanks, and fire means that our troops can then overcome at high speed the resistance of the large units of the first echelon of the enemy and carry their efforts into the depth of the enemy disposition.

During the period of artillery preparation the greatest use will be made of atomic air bursts. The use of these explosions is advisable both as a means of inflicting heavy losses on advancing enemy troops and also ensuring freedom of maneuver for our own troops. The use of surface bursts on the nearest enemy objectives will be limited, owing to the high radioactive contamination of the terrain, and must in all cases be coordinated with troop operations. Otherwise, it is not impossible that on going over to the offensive the troops will be obliged to operate over terrain with a high level of radiation and suffer unjustified losses.

Atomic surface bursts, with a steady wind blowing toward the enemy, can be used to inflict damage on targets in the depth, particularly reserves moving forward, troops, long-range atomic weapons, large command posts and other enemy objectives located on the flanks of the zone of troop operations.

Artillery support of the troops during a counterattack is carried out by artillery fire both with atomic ammunition as well as ammunition with a conventional charge. During this period the main task of the artillery will be the destruction of newly appearing and surviving means of atomic attack, reserves being brought forward, and other targets or pockets of resistance, preventing the advance of our troops.

During the course of the artillery support of a counter-attack, atomic ammunition can be used in the destruction of the most important enemy objectives such as, for example, atomic weapons, reserves being brought forward, especially armored, etc.

It is most characteristic in this period to deliver a single (with one atomic missile) or a group (with several atomic missiles) of atomic strikes in order to destroy the most important targets and objectives of the enemy. A large number of tasks of direct fire support for the troops will probably be decided by conventional and light rocket artillery (legkaya reaktivnaya artilleriya).

The methods of conducting the fire of conventional artillery will depend first of all on the results of the artillery preparation. If during the artillery preparation, the main grouping of the enemy has suffered decisive damage from a mass atomic strike, the main method of support would appear to be concentrated and massed fire on request to neutralize the most important enemy objectives, and also the fire of separate batteries and guns.

If the enemy has not been sufficiently hurt, especially the troops of his first echelon, the artillery support can at first be implemented by successive concentrations of fire against the main centers of enemy resistance, on the surviving and newly spotted artillery and mortar batteries, and other targets and objectives. Great importance is assumed by the timely discovery and destruction of the antitank weapons of the enemy, including his tanks. This is conditioned by the fact that the basis of the counterattacking grouping of our troops will consist of tank large units (units) and on their success will, in many ways, depend the success in carrying out the task as a whole.

During the development of the offensive, the support of the counterattacking troops is carried out by a concentrated and massed fire of all types of artillery against newly spotted targets and objectives preventing the forward movement of the tanks and motorized infantry.

During this period, special attention should be paid to securing the flanks of the counterattacking troops and to denying the enemy movement of tanks, men, and fire means from the depth and along the front in the direction of the counterattack. At the same time it should be taken into account, that under conditions of the mutual use of atomic weapons, the solution of this problem must not be limited to the area of troop operations but must also include the flanks. On the flanks, in the first instance, enemy artillery means of atomic attack and reserves should be destroyed.

The most important task of the artillery is the consolidation and support of the lines reached by the troops as a result of the counterattack.

One of the main conditions for the effective use of artillery fire in a counterattack is the continuous use of reconnaissance in all its forms both before the front and on the flanks of the counter-attacking troops. Reconnaissance of enemy atomic weapons, armored troops, and artillery must be carried out particularly thoroughly. With this aim in view the army artillery headquarters must make wide use of aerial and radar reconnaissance.

During the implementation of the counterattack, our troops may be subjected to attacks by enemy reserves moving up. Artillery, therefore, must be in constant readiness to destroy enemy reserves in the areas of concentration and on the march, as well as to repulse the attacks of these reserves from any direction. For this purpose the commander of army artillery must switch the fire of missile units, and when necessary move them.

In the conduct of a counterattack at night, besides the functions already stated, at the time of artillery support, the artillery organizes for the illumination of the terrain and of separate targets (objectives), the placing of light beacons, and combat with enemy night-vision equipment.

The illumination is usually carried out by separate batteries (platoons) detached from the complement of the artillery groups. At the same time, in order to conceal the direction of operations of the main grouping of the troops, the illumination must be carried out on a unified plan and as far as possible on a wide front.

The destruction of enemy night-vision equipment is carried out by the fire of all artillery and in the first instance by the fire of the escorting artillery operating in the battle formation of the troops.

The successful carrying out of artillery tasks in support of a counterattack requires thorough planning of its fire.

There are considerable shortcomings in carrying out this task, as experience shows. For example, the planning of artillery fire

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with atomic ammunition sometimes is limited simply to the allocation of ammunition in accordance with selected variants of troop operations.

In present-day conditions, with the high dynamic of troop operations, the planning and preparation of fire and movement of artillery in the interests of a counterattack must be carried out immediately after the decision of the army commander on a defensive operation.

It must be taken into account, that although in the past a counterattack was delivered most frequently during the second twenty-four hours of a defensive operation, in present-day conditions, with the rapid tempos of the enemy attack, the necessity for a counterattack may arise even in the first day of a defensive operation. Consequently, the preparation for a counterattack during the course of the operation will be implemented, as a rule, in a short time. Therefore, all necessary and possible measures for the artillery preparation in support of a counterattack must be carried out during the preparation period for the defensive operation.

In accordance with the planned variants of carrying out the counterattack and the projected expenditure of atomic ammunition to be used in each of the directions, the objectives for atomic strikes are selected, as well as the sectors of fire for conventional artillery. In addition to that, in the absence up to a given moment of intelligence information about the enemy, the selection of objectives (sectors of fire) can be carried out on the basis of analysis of the tasks of the troops in the counterattack, possible actions and groupings of enemy troops, and the nature of the terrain.

Subsequently, arising from the tasks of the artillery, the tasks of reconnaissance of the enemy are determined, the movement of artillery is planned, and engineer preparation and topographic-geodetic preparation of the combat formations are carried out.

Naturally, at the time of carrying out the counterattack the situation may turn out to be different from what it was assumed to be during the planning, and significant alterations to the artillery fire plan will be required. It will be advisable to introduce these additions according to the progress of the combat

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operations, and the commander of artillery and the army artillery headquarters must always be fully aware of the situation and of the decisions taken by the army commander, must know the availability and degree of readiness of atomic ammunition, the location and status of artillery and missile units, as well as directly controling the movement of the artillery.

In conditions of mutual employment of atomic weapons by both sides, the use of artillery to support the operations of the troops carrying out a counterattack will have a different aspect.

A wide artillery maneuver in the direction of the counterattack is now accompanied by greater difficulties and losses than was the case in operations before the employment of atomic weapons, because a maneuver can be detected fairly easily and be prevented by an enemy possessing the necessary means of reconnaissance and weapons of mass destruction. Besides this, to execute a maneuver of artillery from other directions and make preparations for its firing requires considerable time, which may not be possible with troop operations from the march. Therefore the concentration of artillery fire in the direction of the counterattack will be carried out primarily by the use of a wide maneuver of fire of the artillery stationed in other directions. A maneuver of fire can be carried out in an undoubtedly shorter period of time than a maneuver of artillery and contributes to a greater extent to the achievement of surprise for the counterattack. In this case, artillery losses from enemy fire, and especially from atomic strikes, can be reduced greatly, in comparison with losses during the carrying out of an artillery maneuver in the direction of the counterattack.

The greatest possibilities for maneuver of fire are possessed by the missile units, as well as long-range conventional artillery. It can be considered that these weapons will become the main ones in the support of troops in a counterattack.

The movement of missile units and long-range conventional artillery during a defensive operation must conform strictly to the planned variants and time periods of the counterattack, in order that readiness to open fire is ensured even before the beginning of the movement of troops, from the areas they occupy, to the line of deployment.

In order to support a counterattack, the artillery of the large units carrying out the counterattack can also be brought in.

The forward movement of this artiller. to firing positions in front of the line of deployment must be carried out somewhat earlier than the forward movement of the troops. This will allow it to be used in carrying out tasks in the interest of supporting the movement of the counterattacking grouping to the line of deployment, its deployment in battle order, and going over to the assault.

The experience of exercises shows, that for the occupation by the artillery of firing positions and fire preparations, on the average up to 1.5 hours is needed, and sometimes more. Consequently, in order that the artillery of the large units of the second echelons and reserves carrying out the counterattack should be able to take part in the artillery preparation, it must begin its forward movement to its designated siting areas approximately 2 hours before the columns of motorized infantry and tanks.

In order to reduce the period of preparation for opening fire of the divisional artillery, it is essential that the topographical preparation of the artillery and the planning of its firing tasks for the period of the artillery preparation and support of the troops carrying out the counterattack should be completed in good time during the course of the defensive operation. After a decision is reached for a counterattack, possible changes in the fire plan must be passed immediately to the divisional artillery commanders and commanders of artillery groups, if possible, before the movement of the artillery forward to the firing positions.

In carrying out a counterattack in a direction not envisaged in the plan, the topographical preparation for the artillery is accomplished by accelerated methods on maps or small-scale aerial photographs, as well as with the wide use of auto-mechanical means of topographical tying in. The tasks are passed to the artillery by all means of communication available, primarily by radio or by brief battle orders.

The forward movement of divisional artillery must be carried out in a concealed manner, along routes prescribed for the forward movement of combined-arms columns, but under favorable conditions and along independent routes.

To reduce the time for forward movement of artillery and to reduce possible losses by enemy fire, its forward movement must be carried out in approximately the same manner as for combined-arms large units, i.e., from the areas of concentration to the

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line of deployment of the regiments into battalion columns, the artillery groups move along regimental routes, then from this line they must break up into columns of battalions (divizion) and move with these columns along battalion (batalonnyy) routes up to the firing positions assigned in front of the line of commitment.

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The timely forward movement of divisional artillery to the line of deployment is possible if a sufficient number of routes is available, ensuring the movement along them of the artillery.

To ensure the simultaneous occupation by the artillery of the firing positions and simultaneous readiness to open fire, it is advisable to form the artillery columns in such a way that the battalions whose fire positions have been selected nearer to the main line of resistance should move at the heads of the columns of the artillery groups. Besides this, with these aims in view it is advisable that the firing positions of battalions in the groups (and when possible of batteries in the battalions) should be echeloned in depth, selecting them in closest proximity to the routes of movement.

The movement of divisional artillery to the line of deployment during the delivery of a counterattack from the march must be carried out in such a way that the anti-tank reserves of the large units move up immediately after the leading detachments, and under the cover of these leading detachments and the tank-destroyer artillery, the artillery belonging to the artillery groups moves up.

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